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Siren Song

by [Deminos](#)

Summary

Everybody wants to dig up dirt on nightclub owner (and suspected Mafia Boss) Arthur Pendragon, and reporter Mordred Druiden is no different. While his evenings in Arthur's club "Saunter" doesn't lead Mordred to his golden ticket, it does however, lead him right to Pendragon's Darling.

Notes

This chapter occurs about eight months after the first chapter. Listening to "Young and Beautiful" by Alana Del Ray is highly recommended. Thank you for enjoying the first fic so much, hope this one is just as good. :)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Club Saunter, despite it's name, isn't one of those clubs that you can just simply waltz into. Rather, it's one of those clubs, so absurd in its exclusiveness, that it isn't surprising people are willing to sell their souls in exchange for entry. *Well, at least it doesn't disappoint*, muses Mordred as he takes in the club.

The atmosphere is thick with the scent of cigars and cigarettes that coyly fills his lungs with each and every breath he takes. However, the aroma is nowhere near as stifling as the air of wealth that bleeds from both the club's rich, red upholstered walls and its patrons. The signs of money are everywhere: from the mahogany bar to the red accents that absorb the warm light that glows ever so softly overhead. There's enough shadow, though; enough darkness to hide the scandalous sight

of red-lipped women whispering secrets, and of men confessing equally scandalous intentions.

He doesn't fit in here, not at all, but he needs to be here if he wants the scoop.

Saunter isn't just one of the most exclusive clubs in New York, it's a club owned by the Pendragons. Arthur Pendragon, to be exact, and Mordred wants, no; *needs* any angle he can take in an attempt to find out all he can about the apparent mob boss. So here he is, dressed in a borrowed suit that's a bit too tight in some areas and a bit too loose in others, trying to fit in with a crowd better suited for a Hollywood film than real life.

"What can I get you?" asks the bartender the moment Mordred sits down on the stool.

"Just a rum and coke, thanks," he says and he smiles, not because of the good service- because in that retrospect, he expects nothing less from such an upscale establishment- but because the bartender is smiling too. It's a very nice smile, thinks Mordred as he watches the bartender make his drink. "Thanks," he nods, taking a sip. "So... do you happen to know where the best burgers in town are?"

Blue eyes widening, the bartender's smiles in amusement. "New around here, are you?" he asks while absentmindedly wiping down the table.

"I guess," Mordred lies with a shrug. Even the glass screams expensive, with the deceptively simple design and the tiny dragon marked near the rim. "I've been so swamped with work I haven't had the time to go look myself."

"Sorry," says the bartender. "I don't eat out often enough to know, but I'm sure some diners should still be open if you want to check them out."

"Can't," Mordred says sheepishly. "I'm here in a poor attempt to find and woo prospective customers tonight. I'm Mordred Druiden, by the way. You should hopefully be seeing more of me," he adds as an afterthought, sticking out his hand.

Shaking his hand the bartender supplies his own name. "Merlin Emrys," he says but then shuffles off to serve some more customers.

Merlin navigates with such ease, pouring, making drinks and cleaning up the trail of mess made by customers. The bar seems to remain spotless and Mordred concludes that Merlin must've worked here for a long time. He must know Arthur Pendragon, or at least know where to point Mordred in the right direction. Patiently he waits for Merlin to draw nearer before trying to start conversation again. "If you don't mind me asking, how long have you been working here?"

"Not long," Merlin says with a shrug.

"I think it's amazing that you spend all night dealing with so many posh people. I'm sure they mustn't be very kind while under the influence."

That coaxes a low chuckle from Merlin. "It's not that bad. The pay more than makes up for it and I'm sure there are worse jobs out there." Those eyes narrow minutely. "Shouldn't you be mingling?"

"Just on the lookout tonight," Mordred says hastily, "for potential clients." Merlin nods, more to himself than anyone else. Mordred deems it wise to ease up on his questioning, at least for now. Ordering another drink, he sips at it, gaze torn between watching the entrance of the club or watching Merlin's easy smile as he serves customers.

Finding information on Arthur Pendragon is very much akin to finding the Holy Grail... perhaps not that dramatic, but it is something that everyone wants to know. He's untouchable, his fingers in every pot of honey as he wreaks havoc from the shadows.. Not a single person has yet to catch him in the act. Anyone that does will be immortalised as the person who brought down Arthur Pendragon.

Mordred wants to be that person; the fall of Arthur Pendragon. To bring him to his knees and shatter his armour of wealth and power. Mordred can do this, he *will* just as long as he doesn't get distracted by everything that is Merlin.

"Rough day?" Merlin asks as he slides a glass of rum and coke to where Mordred is.

"What makes you think that?" Mordred replies, somewhat touched at Merlin's concern...then again, it's probably the job of the bartender to care.

"You've been staring at the table for about ten minutes. For a moment, I thought you were sleeping with your eyes open."

Mordred laughs at that. "Just thinking. Sometimes.. I guess I just wish I stood out more, made more of a difference, you know?"

"Not really," Merlin says with a tight shrug that makes the black, clean-cut vest stretch over his chest. "But good luck on things getting better for you. You've spent every second night here so far. That's got to show dedication if nothing else. Chin up." Smiling warmly Merlin passes another drink to Mordred. "It's not much, but it's on the house."

"Your boss won't mind?"

Merlin laughs, shaking his head. "I highly doubt Miss Morgana will mind at all."

Accepting the drink Mordred speaks hesitantly. "I was under the impression Arthur Pendragon owns this establishment?"

Brows furrowing, Merlin bites his bottom lip. Just as he's about to say something the lights dim, and all Mordred notices is how the the shadow and lights flicker over Merlin's face, sharpening those cheekbones and making those blue eyes glow.

The single low hum of a violin catches the attention of everyone present. Light shines down, focusing on the grand piano on stage and the pianist sitting behind it. Her expression is cold; much like the ice in her gaze and the meticulousness way in which she dresses. The cut of her vest accentuates her curves and regal posture. Even the white sleeves of her shirt are perfectly rolled up her elbows. She lowers her gaze, the french twist of blonde hair showing off her elegant neck. Then, exuding ease, she begins to play. A string of piano notes, simple and clean, rings through the rapidly quieting crowd. In a sea of flowing skirts, women part the dance floor with their men in tow.

"I've seen the world, done it all. Had my cake now," sings a woman sitting on the piano. Mordred recognises her as Morgana Pendragon. *"Diamonds, brilliant and Bel Air, now."*

There must be something in the water, concludes Mordred, because no one could be so beautiful, and yet upon the stage are two of the most alluring women he's ever seen. A second light shines down upon Morgana and practically shimmers off the flawless silk of her emerald dress.

She's a siren, thinks Mordred; the way her red lips curve close to the microphone coyly as she sings. Every sound is a gift to the audience, but her attention is given to no one.

“H-how often do they perform?” Mordred asks, unable to look away as Morgana lies down on the piano, loose ebony curls framing her face. The hem of her dress parts at the slit, revealing the soft pale curve of her thigh.

“Whenever they feel like it,” Merlin explains. “More people turn up on a regular basis when there’s no performance schedule.” Distantly, Mordred hears Merlin walk off but he’s too rapt in the performance to... to do anything but watch.

“Will you still love me when I’m no longer young and beautiful?” Sprawling across the piano, Morgana reaches out, a joyous expression blooming on her face as the pianist accepts her hand, their fingers entwining. *“I know you will. I know you will. I know that you will.”*

The song ends all too soon. Mordred realises that he’s on the edge of his seat, and has been the whole song. Close to falling, he thinks, falling for the song, the owner, the damn bartender and his gentle smiles. Slowly piecing together the bits of his composure Mordred sits facing the bar again. When he looks up he sees that Merlin is smiling at him in the fond, exasperated way that older siblings give their younger ones.

Mordred doesn’t know why but it makes him flush, badly enough so that he has to look down to hide the fact that his cheeks are heating up in embarrassment.

“No bowtie today?” Mordred asks as Merlin passes him his drink.

Unconsciously, Merlin brings his hand up rub at his neck, fingers slipping under the collar of his shirt. “Forgot,” he says sheepishly. “How’s work?” he asks, and Mordred knows when someone’s trying to change the topic.

“Not good,” he admits because he’s been here four times other the duration of a fortnight and so far there’s been no sign of Arthur Pendragon. “Having trouble looking for the right client.”

“What type are you looking for?”

“Rich,” Mordred mumbles, “Interesting, willing to share information that would be mutually beneficial.”

“For you or for your client?” Merlin asks, tilting his head in a certain way.

It’s then that Mordred notices the love bite, splotches of red and violet, barely hidden by the collar. He can’t help but wonder who put it there, as well as what type of lover Merlin prefers... and if he was adequate enough to fulfil such criteria.

“My brother is visiting us soon,” drawls a sultry voice as Morgana sashays towards them. Rather than waiting for Merlin to fix her a drink she does it herself, going behind the bar to reach for the fixings to make a martini.

Merlin sighs, suddenly looking much more glum. “Joy,” he says, plucking the items from Morgana as he pours the gin and vermouth into a glass, mixing it with a olive stuck on a toothpick before garnishing it with a twirl of lemon peel.

“Thank you, Merlin,” accepting the drink she leans over to kiss Merlin on the cheek, right on the corner of his lips, leaving a vibrant red trace. “And a gin and tonic for Morgause if you don’t mind.”

“*Morgana*.” Merlin scowls, picking up a napkin to wipe viciously at the kiss mark though it’s a fruitless endeavour, the colour already staining his skin. “You know what he’s like.” He glares half-heartedly at Morgause who, much to Mordred’s surprise is standing almost behind him. “Why don’t you stop her?”

Morgause has a hint of a smile gracing her lips as she accepts her drink from Merlin. “As if Morgause would deprive me of my fun.” Morgana laughs melodiously. “You wouldn’t, would you, dear heart of mine.”

Mordred wonders if they’re doing this on purpose. Talking so near, making him feel a part of this conversation but at the same time letting him know that he’s intruding; that he doesn’t belong in their world.

“You Pendragons and your abuse of pet names,” Merlin mutters.

“Speak of the devil,” Morgause speaks. Her voice is deeper, smoother than Mordred had first thought and it reminds him of dark chocolate, rich and silky soft.

A wary look crosses Merlin’s face and Mordred can feel it, the sense of foreboding that whispers seductively in his ears and makes his spine tingle. He turns around, focusing on the entrance of the club and sees none other than Arthur Pendragon.

Mordred’s heard of him before; has seen blurry black and white pictures as well, but to actually see the man in person is another thing entirely.

He strides in, the three-piece, suit pinstriped suit melds to his form. The dark navy tones stand out starkly against the beige of his coat and the red of his tie. He wears his clothes like armour, his gaze a weapon, though Mordred doesn’t doubt the fact that somewhere on his body is a gun. Amongst the lavish crowd Arthur stands out so much; a level above the rest and he knows it too.

As he strides closer, Mordred doesn’t know whether to retreat, or stay where he is and try make himself as small as possible in a poor attempt to go unnoticed. He didn’t expect this, to choke on the oppressive aura that oozes from the mob boss.

“Sister,” he greets, allowing Morgana to come up to him and hug him before dragging him closer to where Merlin is. Taking off his fedora Arthur sits down, a stool away from Mordred. Stray beams of light casts over them and Mordred notices how every subtle movement Arthur makes turns his hair different shades of blond.

“Finished with work, have you?” Morgause asks. Mordred wonders if they get along; clearly not, judging by the way Morgause crosses her arms and her guarded expression.

“For tonight at least,” Arthur replies as he sets his hat down and digs into the pocket of his coat to pull out a cigar. He slides it into his mouth but doesn’t light it; instead he just stares at Merlin expectantly.

“You’d think a man of your age would know how to light his own cigars,” Merlin says with a sigh as he lights a match, leaning over the table to place the flame under Arthur’s cigar.

“Well,” Arthur takes a few puffs before drawing away. “Considering that I *own* you, I might as well get my money’s worth.”

Face scrunching up in distaste, Merlin slides the glass of scotch over to Arthur. “Taking me home today, are you?”

“That’s the plan; aren’t I a gracious boss?” He flashes a predatory grin, blue eyes glinting

dangerously. Merlin looks back at him, gaze stubborn and unrelenting. It seems as though a silent conversation is shared between them.

“You’re the lord of prats, that’s what you are.”

“Come now, boys.” Morgana rolls her eyes. “Behave and play nice.”

They’re friends, Mordred realises. Merlin and Arthur Pendragon are friends. That changes everything. A new plan forms in Mordred’s mind, a door of opportunity in which Merlin is key.

Mordred decides that the next time Arthur Pendragon arrives, Mordred will be ready. Though, while he does have his camera with him... He hasn’t quite thought through what to do next.

“Why do you have a camera with you?” asks Merlin, eyebrows furrowing together.

“Oh, um,” he really didn’t think this through. “It broke, and I finally got it repaired today.”

“Your job must be very well-paying if you can afford a camera.” Merlin smiles, relaxing as he returns to wiping at the glasses.

“Not really,” caressing the button and frame of the lens. “It took a long time to save up; can’t say it wasn’t worth it though. He looks up at Merlin, feeling slightly giddy. “Would you mind?” he holds the camera up.

“Mind...?” Merlin looks even more confused, but clarity hits him soon enough. “You want a photo with me?”

“Why not? I think we’re good friends.” Already Mordred’s standing up, walking behind the bench though he’s not sure if he’s allowed to do that or not.

“Aren’t they expensive to develop? I’m sure there are better things you can take pictures of.”

“Nonsense, at least it will show my boss that I’m taking the job seriously.” Taking a moment to pass his camera to the nearest person and teach them how to use it, Mordred wraps an arm around Merlin’s shoulder. “Smile, Merlin.”

The stranger clicks the button and a flashing light blinds him.

Merlin’s still blinking away the specks of light in his vision and Mordred hates to admit how adorable he looks doing it.

“*Merlin*,” Morgana purrs. “My brother is coming for a visit.”

Automatically, Merlin begins to fix her usual drink. “For someone in his profession, he sure does have a lot of time to fool around.”

Mordred can’t help himself. “Profession?” he asks, “I thought Mr. Pendragon owns the bar?”

“As a hobby,” Morgana wrinkles her nose. “I run it though, so it’s more mine than his.” Her eyes narrow, lips curving into a smile. “And who might you be, little love?”

“I’m Mordred,” he stutters. She’s close enough that he can smell the elusive scent of her perfume; notice the dazzling green of her eyes.

“You’ve been around a lot,” she drawls, bringing her cigarette holder to her lips and taking a drag.

“Liking it here that much, are we?”

“I’ve been waiting,” he breathes deeply, gulping in air as if there was a sudden shortage. “For you to perform again, Lady Morgana.”

Suddenly she throws her head back, letting out peals of laughter that catch the attention of the patrons near by. “Lady!” she exclaims. “Darling,” she coos, “You’re absolutely precious. You’re in luck. I think I will perform tonight.”

“Shall I prepare the piano then?” Morgause asks.

Mordred almost falls off his chair in surprise when he hears Morgause speak. How was she able to do that? It's almost as if she were more smoke and air than anything of substance.

“That would be wonderful, dear heart,” setting down her drink, Morgana reaches out and accepts Morgause’s outstretched hand. She’s about to walk off but takes a moment to look back, smiling at Merlin. “I’ll have someone else man the bar while you’re busy with my brother.”

“Thank you, Morgana,” Merlin says tightly.

Mordred wonders why that is, but doesn’t dwell on it too much. He decides that when Morgana starts her performance and the light dims... In the midst of the distraction he’ll go seek the offices. There must be information there or at least something that will guide him. Something that will take him a step closer to bringing down Arthur Pendragon.

Heart thundering against the melody of the song, he retreats into the shadows, gliding through the darkness to wander along the corridor. The first door he comes into contact with is locked, but that’s not a problem. He’s been in this career long enough to know how to pick locks. It doesn’t take that long before the jangling of the pin in the hole causes a resonating click.

He enters the room, clicking the door shut behind him. It’s not an office he walks into, but a dressing room. Instruments rest in the far corner. Makeup litters the dresser table and the lights along the frame of the mirror is still fully lit. There’s nothing here, at least nothing that’s useful for him.

He’s about to leave and look for the office when the soft, barely audible sound of footsteps draw closer. Panic sets in, and Mordred does the first thing that comes to him. He hides in the closet, almost an impossibility due to the sheer amount of clothing stuffed inside. The door barely closes, but he does manage it and now, if his luck holds true then the footsteps will pass and no one will enter.

Mordred inwardly curses at himself when the door clicks open.

“Couldn’t you have waited until I finished my shift?”

It’s Merlin, realises Mordred. To better affirm this, he very carefully peers through the keyhole. It’s big enough that he can see just what’s happening.

“Seeing as I *own* you,” Arthur Pendragon drawls as he hangs his coat on the nearby coat-rack, “I don’t see why that’s something I have to worry about.”

“Selfish prat,” Merlin grumbles as he stands there in the middle of the room looking both lost and annoyed.

“I could be a selfish prat,” Arthur drawls as he steps closer to Merlin, “I could be a monster. A killer.” He’s right in Merlin’s personal space now, lips almost touching. “And that wouldn’t

matter, because I'd still own you," and with that declaration he touches his lips to touch Merlin's.

Mordred muffles his gasp just in time. Arthur Pendragon enjoys the company of men. Arthur Pendragon is a sodomite. A sex fiend who's... who's taking advantage of Merlin. Mordred can work with this; if Merlin needs help if Merlin wants to be free of Arthur... then all he has to do is go to Mordred.

"An idiot," corrects Merlin when they break free from seemingly gentle kiss. "A dollop-headed arse, that's what you are, *moron*."

There's a moment of silence and Mordred waits; anxious and expecting the mafia boss to do something terrible like hurt Merlin, even kill him over such an insult, but all Arthur does is throw his head back and laugh. "*Darling*," he teases but there's a hint of menace in his tone, "As much as I love your sass, I didn't come here for just that."

"Pervert," Merlin mutters, but he's the one that reaches to undo Arthur's belt buckle and it's Arthur who stops him. "No, Merlin."

"What difference does it make?" Merlin sounds exasperated, so much like an adult dealing with a bothersome child that Mordred can almost laugh at the situation.

"All the difference," Arthur growls and Mordred can see how he tightens his grip on Merlin's wrists a fraction.

Mordred can't hear what Merlin says next because it's a string of mumbles, but Mordred's sure they're insults and curses as Merlin pulls away and begins to undo the buttons of his vest and shirt. With each button that's undone, the back of Merlin's shirt dips lower and lower until eventually it falls to the floor in a puddle. Love bites dot the expanse of Merlin's back, patches of soft pink and scarlet rampant against the fair skin as if he has been mauled by some feral creature. If anything, they make him seem even more appealing, his pale flesh almost luminous, his raven hair even darker.

"You're so spoilt," Merlin says as he gets down on his knees, hands once again going to undo the clasp of Arthur's belt.

Arthur doesn't reply; instead he tangles his gloved fingers in Merlin's hair, tugging at the strands.

The sound of a zipper being pulled sounds loud, even to Mordred's ears. Then he sees it, Arthur's cock already hardening as it protrudes from his open fly. Merlin draws close enough to stick out his tongue, lapping at the head of Arthur's cock, then along the vein.

Mordred's mouth feels dry as he watches Merlin slowly take in more of Arthur's cock, sinking lower down the shaft until there's barely any of it left to grip.

"Come on, *Merlin*, I know you can do better than that," Arthur says, but his words are mangled by the groan of pleasure that escapes his lips at the same time. Bringing up his hands to grasp at Arthur's hips, Merlin shivers, fingers rhythmically clenching as he prepares himself. There's a gurgle, a moan, before Merlin takes Arthur to the root.

Even with his vision being framed by the keyhole Mordred can clearly see the bob of Merlin's throat as he pleasures Arthur. The way Merlin pulls back only to sink down again. The string of precome and saliva on his lips that connects to the head of Arthur's cock. How it pulls taut, thinning out before breaking.

"I hate to admit this," Arthur whispers, eyes dilated in pleasure. "But you've been worth it so far, despite the profit loss."

“How gracious of you,” Merlin pants, eyes glinting before he leans in closer, nuzzling at Arthur’s bare hip.

Arthur growls, low and dangerous as his grip on Merlin becomes harsh, pulling him back. “You bit me!” he accuses, “You minx.”

As wrong as it is to intrude on such a private moment, Mordred can’t help it. It’s expected within his profession but at the same time.. God. To see Merlin look like this... it makes something within Mordred burn, and shame fills him when his cock twitches at the sight of them.

“Guess I should finish up soon.” Gripping his cock at the base, Arthur rubs it along Merlin’s lips before slipping the tip into Merlin’s mouth.. “So you can get back to your shift.” Merlin just accepts it, and Mordred watches as he allows Arthur to fuck his mouth. The room is filled with the obscene sound of slick flesh on flesh, of Merlin’s moans and Arthur’s whispered filthy words.

Mordred doesn’t dare touch himself; stuck in the closet with so little room there isn’t any space to do so. It isn’t a smart thing, but he can’t help himself as he comes, untouched, to the sound of Arthur and Merlin in the midst of their carnal act.

When Arthur comes, it’s with Merlin’s name on his lips. He doesn’t move, spilling his seed into Merlin’s mouth, keeping him there so Merlin swallows it all. “You’re so good, Darling.” He allows Merlin to pull away, cock growing flaccid. “Such improvement.”

“Arse,” Merlin mutters as he stands up, pulling a handkerchief from his pocket to wipe at his mouth.

“Don’t tell me you didn’t enjoy it,” Arthur laughs, tucking his cock back in. "Your nips aren't the only part of you that're hard, are they?"

Merlin lets out a gasp when Arthur cups the bulge in front of his pants. He moves away, bending down to pick up his clothes and putting them on. “Arthur, I’m going home tonight.” When he’s finished Mordred can’t even tell that moments before, he was on his knees or that beneath those layers of clothing is a body made for ravishment.

“No,” corrects Arthur. “You’re going to mine tonight.”

“My mother’s sick,” Merlin reasons and even while they’re arguing Merlin takes the time to fix up Arthur’s tie, tugging at the lapels to straighten out his suit. “So I’m going home to take care of her.”

There’s silence, thick and heavy before Arthur speaks again. “Is it... anything serious?”

“Don't pretend you care, Arthur.” Merlin trails his hands down Arthur’s chest and once again they’re so close to each other, breathing the same air. “One day...” he speaks softly, “One day, you’ll get sick of me and I’ll be rid of you.”

Arthur chuckles, a low rumble. “Good luck with that, darling.”

Merlin rolls his eyes and is the first to leave. Arthur stays back, taking time to tuck his coat on and pulling out a cigar and lighter. “Don’t hold your breath, Merlin.”

It baffles Mordred, hearing someone like Arthur Pendragon sound so tender, so human. It’s only when the mob boss leaves that Mordred sinks down to the wardrobe floor, pants still sticky with his own seed. He realises then that he’s been clutching his camera the whole time.

“What happened to your face?” Mordred asks, aghast at the ugly bruise that adorns Merlin’s left cheek. It looks terrible, the vivid shades of purple and red speaking of how recently it came to be there.

Merlin tries to smile reassuringly, but instead winces when it causes him pain. “It’s nothing, really. Your usual?”

“Um, sure.” Not quite knowing what to say Mordred can only shamelessly stare at the bruise. “Did someone punch you?” he asks, at the back of his mind he wonders if Arthur was the reason; even if they seem to be lovers. The apple never falls far from the tree and Uther had been an angry man. Mordred wonders if that had been passed onto Arthur, and if he too possesses the trait.

“Don’t worry about it, Mordred, really. Some drunk refused to leave the other night and when I did try to make him go...” Merlin trails off with a shrug. “What do you have there?” he asks instead, trying to change the subject as he slides the drink in front of Mordred.

He’s been here often enough that Merlin still allows him the last drink, even if the rest of the staff are stacking up chairs and getting ready to leave for the night. It only takes a moment for Mordred to make his decision, but it takes him a bit longer to try to get the words out. “Merlin,” he says in a tight voice. “If... you need help. I’ll do all that I can for you. Anything in my power.”

Merlin looks at Mordred as if he were some crazed man. “Mordred, it was an unlucky night. These things are to be expected.”

“Yeah,” Mordred agrees, not quite knowing how he can say this without admitting to being a peeping tom and that mere days ago he witnessed Merlin and Arthur together in an act that, if made public, would send them both to prison.

“You’re my friend,” he tries again. “So if you ever need anything; anything at all, just... Let me know.”

“I’m your bartender,” The bruise on his face doesn’t stop the merry twinkle in Merlin’s eyes. “But it’s very kind of you to offer, Mordred. Thank you.”

“Merlin,” Morgana calls out. Now that it’s near closing she looks different, her makeup is off and she wears a fur coat to stave off the creeping cold. “You can go home now, Arthur’s waiting for you.” Then she turns to Mordred.

“We’ve another hour until proper closing,” reasons Merlin, and he gestures towards the few people still drinking. “What if they want drinks?”

“Merlin. I’m sure I’ll be able to provide. Go on, shoo!”

“Have a nice night, Morgana.” Smiling sheepishly Merlin looks at him, “You too, Mordred.”

Then he’s off, out the door with his jacket tucked under his arm.

“Would you like another?” Morgana asks as she moves behind the bar.

“Actually,” Mordred says, and then pauses. On closer inspection, he notices that most of the patrons have gone and only one other man remains, sitting by himself in the corner. “I think I should get out of your hair for the night.” Drowning down the rest of his drink he passes the empty glass to Morgana who doesn’t say anything but merely watches him with curious eyes.

Mordred's unsure to what to do next... what plan of action to take in his matter and, yet at the same time he doesn't want to give up, to admit defeat. He's just going to have to try again with Merlin, or look for another way because there has to be one. There has to be.

He sees Merlin a few feet away and is about to pick up his pace to meet him when a Rolls Royce pulls up next to Merlin.

"What the *hell*?" Arthur exclaims the moment he steps out of the car. Mordred draws back just in time, hiding away and once again becoming a peeping tom into the lives of Merlin and Arthur. As a reporter, it's part of his profession; and yet he's grown attached. Mordred wants nothing more than to free Merlin of the beast that is Arthur Pendragon.

Mordred hates it, watching the way that Arthur grasps at Merlin, manhandles him and pulls him close. "*Who*," Arthur snarls, eyes glinting dangerously, and even from this distance Mordred can sense it, the threatening air of a dangerous criminal.

"Arthur. *Arthur*, calm down," Merlin chides as he places his hands on Arthur's neck. "It was just some drunkard. Just a normal day at work."

"Tell me, *Merlin*," he growls, insistent, bringing a gloved hand to gingerly touch at Merlin's bruise, trailing his fingers along Merlin's jaw, the sweep of his purpling cheekbone. "*Who*." He may be angry, seething with malice, but the way Arthur touches Merlin is so gentle it's... baffling. It's as if he actually cares though Mordred knows that such a thing is an impossibility.

"Stop overreacting, Arthur," Merlin sighs as he continues to allow Arthur to caress him. When it becomes too much Merlin pulls back, hand dismissively swatting Arthur away. "It's been a long day. I just want to go home."

Arthur's jaw is clenched tightly, muscles ticking. Eyes smoldering with anger, he acquiesces silently, opening the car door and ushering Merlin inside before getting in himself.

Mordred watches them drive away and ponders...

He's going to die, thinks Mordred the moment he spots Arthur Pendragon on the way home. He resigns himself to the fact that he's going to be found dead in a ditch, floating at the bottom of the river, with his feet set in cement or left dead in an alleyway.

For one brief, panicked moment, Mordred considers running for it even though he knows better than that. Running would just clue Arthur in, make him suspicious. If he's lucky, maybe Mordred can feign ignorance. As a patron of the club, a regular no less, it's normal to be interested...maybe a little too interested, but harmlessly so.

"Um.." Is the first utterance that comes out of his mouth. His heart is pounding too wildly, and he frantically wonders if there's anything on him that will identify him as a reporter. Nothing, he prays. He's left his camera at home and without it he looks like any day worker, crunching numbers and typing words. Or at least he prays that's how he appears.

Arthur's expression... it isn't cold, but neither is it warm. He's leaning against the side of his car, the cold night air unable to penetrate his thick woolen trench coat or lavishly tailored suit. There's a stillness to him that makes Mordred more wary.

Maybe it's just a coincidence... maybe Arthur's looking for someone else who just so happens to live in the same apartment complex as he does. He realises how stupid he now sounds and concentrates on keeping a calm, casual exterior.

“Mordred,” Arthur Pendragon says the moment Mordred’s within ear shot.

His blood runs cold. He finds himself barely able to speak; he can only turn and whisper, “Yes?”

“I’ve no doubt that you’re aware of who I am.” Taking out a cigar he lights it up, taking a puff and exhaling in a long, billowing stream of smoke. “So formal introductions are rather redundant I believe.”

“You’re Arthur Pendragon.” *Stay calm. Stay calm. Stay calm.* “T-the owner of the club.”

“That I am. I dabble in other things too, of course. The family business and all that jazz.” The ash falls from the cigar, flecks of amber fading into dreary gray as it falls to the ground.

“What do you want from me?”

There’s a thump, and Mordred realises that it’s coming from the trunk of the car. If he strains his ears he can hear it, the sound of muffled whimpers and pleas.

“A little bird,” Arthur drawls, seeming to ignore the man in the trunk. “Told me that you’ve been sniffing around. Naturally, I’d be a bit concerned. It is my establishment, after all..and I’ve been known to take care of my things.”

Like Merlin, His mind supplies and Mordred bites back a retort.

“I know who you are.” Arthur retains his calm voice and cold exterior but there’s a dark promise, thinly veiled within his words. “So the question is; what to do with you.”

Dead man walking, that’s what Mordred thinks he is, but he’s not going down without a fight. As if he would actually do something as foolish as getting into the car...not that Arthur has yet to order such a thing.

The sounds in the trunk get louder, and it’s so very disconcerting to hear; that the man within might not live past tonight. Mordred wonders what he did to incur the wrath of Arthur Pendragon.

Arthur seems to notice his curiosity. “Don’t worry about him,” he assures, rapping on the trunk sharply in reprimand. The man in the trunk falls silent and Arthur clicks his tongue. “Just teaching someone a lesson. He should know better than to cause a fuss at such a upscale club, hurting employees.”

Ah, so Arthur didn’t hurt Merlin and yet that doesn’t change how Mordred sees him because Arthur is still very much, dangerous.“You going to kill me?”

Arthur laughs so loudly that Mordred flinches. “Kill you?” Arthur repeats, incredulous. He can barely speak he’s laughing so much. “Dear god man, you’re harmless! What could you possibly do to me?”

It’s unwise, to feel so angry and yet Mordred feels exactly that. “I know about you and Merlin,” he blurts out unthinkingly.

In an instant all the laughter dies and Arthur stands up upright, stalking closer. For the first time in Mordred's life, fear grips him so tightly that he can barely move.

“I know. At first I considered doing something not so nice to you,” Arthur confesses. “Even worse than what I’m going to do tonight to, our wayward patron... but I figured it would be smarter to have you on my side.”

Mordred balks. "You want me... to work for you?"

"Call it an investment." Taking out his wallet, Arthur pulls out an obscene amount of money, easily thrice as much as he makes in a fortnight, a month even. Arthur moves close and Mordred's deathly still as the money's tucked into the pocket of his coat.

"And if I decline?" he dares to ask.

"Then there's nothing more I can do," Arthur shrugs. As if it's that simple, but Mordred knows that he's dead the moment he declines. A man like Arthur Pendragon doesn't need to make a threat, the fact that you're on his radar is enough in itself. Mordred accepts the offer, if for nothing else but to live another day.

"Best be off. Much to do." Dropping the cigar to the floor Arthur crushes the butt with his shoes before opening the door to the car. "Oh and Mordred? Stay away from Merlin. He's *mine*." Then he drives off, leaving Mordred alone in the middle of the street as he tries to regain his breath and quell his heart's rapid beating.

End Notes

Next part: Merlin meets Gwaine, Arthur gets jealous. Arthur allows Gwaine to teach Merlin how to use a gun. He doesn't expect the insane amount of jealousy that comes with the decision. Let the stocking porn commence!

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